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REPRESSION OF PEOPLE OF KOSOVO

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, the United States in concert with its allies must act immediately to prevent a resumption of the brutal repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and to get real--not sham--negotiations started.

The past two weeks have seen appalling massacres of innocent ethnic Albanians in Kosovo by heavily armed Serbian paramilitary forces. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's black-suited thugs used artillery, armored personnel carriers, heavy caliber machine guns, and even helicopter gunships to carry out their gruesome work.

The pretext for their violence was an ambush of Serbian policy by the secretive Kosovo Liberation Army, which left four policemen dead. But we know that Milosevic had been planning military action in Kosovo for months. He was just waiting for an excuse to issue the final orders.

Not only were supposed members of the Kosovo Liberation Army murdered, but scores of innocent civilians, including women and children, were killed.

There is strong circumstantial evidence indicating that many victims were tortured before being put to death. Demands by Kosovo Albanians for outside forensic investigations before their kin were buried were cruelly denied by the Serbs, who dumped the corpses into mass graves.

Next, the world witnessed the spectacle of survivors exhuming the bodies of their loved ones in order to give them dignified, Muslim burials.

Mr. President, this behavior is worthy of the Dark Ages, not the end of the twentieth century.

Having ordered these massacres and ghoulish follow-up, Milosevic, true to form, attempted to con world opinion.

He sent a delegation to Pristina and offered to talk with the Kosovo Albanians 'without preconditions'--except for the little detail that the Albanians would have to negotiate within the framework of the Republic of Serbia.

In other words, the Kosovo Albanians would have to give up their only bargaining chip at the outset, namely their demand for independence. Some deal.

Moreover, the Belgrade Bully rubbed salt in the wounds of the community whom his storm troopers had just massacred by declaring that he would negotiate with the 'Albanian minority,' meaning a minority in Serbia, not the ninety percent majority they hold in Kosovo.

No, Mr. President, this was not a serious offer of negotiations. It was vintage Milosevic 'bait and switch.' Rather than beginning the necessary quiet dialogue, he cynically tried to make a public splash, while continuing to repress.

Once again, the civilized world is faced with a deadly serious challenge.

There is a real possibility that if Milosevic in his Greater Serbian haze tries to 'ethnically cleanse' Kosovo of its ethnic Albanian population, the

violence could spread into a full-scale Balkan War, cutting short the recent progress we have made in Bosnia and fracturing NATO.

The cynical side of me tells me part of why he moved when he did was because of Bosnia.

Mr. President, I hope this time we will act without having to have 4 years of convulsions like we had on Bosnia, even though it is a very different circumstance in terms of what is at stake. It is not different in terms of the brutality and the atrocities that have occurred. It is time to act. The bipartisan resolution I am cosponsoring is just a beginning. I believe the United States should immediately reimpose all financial sanctions against Serbia, except for democratic assistance. We should insist that Milosevic lift the repressive martial law in Kosovo and withdraw his storm troopers. The United States must actively facilitate immediate good faith negotiations between Belgrade and Kosovo without preconditions as called for by the contact group to which we belong.

If Milosevic does not unconditionally come to the negotiating table by next week, we should freeze Yugoslavian assets abroad, attempting to exempt assets in Montenegro whose new reformist President has been cooperative in a number of ways. Milosevic

and his Serbian colleagues should understand that if the atrocities resume, and if he does not protect lives, human rights, and the autonomy of the people of Kosovo, the pressure from the United States, and hopefully others, will escalate.

I believe the President is right when he suggests that no option should be ruled out. Milosevic is a thug. He is the President of a country but he is a thug. He should be indicted as a war criminal. He should be tried at The Hague. I reiterate what I told him to his face 4 years ago in his office when he asked me what I thought of him. He is a war criminal. He looked at me as if we were having a civilized discussion and said, 'And what do you think of me,' and I repeat publicly what I said to him privately. I said, 'I think you are a war criminal and should be tried as such.' Unfortunately, I have never been more correct than I was then. This guy is a thug. We should make no bones about who he is.

Mr. President, I hope that the concurrent resolution for which we have 1 hour of debate here, the concurrent resolution that is introduced by Mr. Nickles, Mr. Dodd, myself, Mr. Helms, Mr. Lieberman and others, I hope we pass it, and pass it swiftly.